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Reprinted from The American Political Science Review,
Vol. IX, No. 1, February, 1915

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In 1806 Prussia engaged in war with Napoleon. The swiftest of his triumphs followed. In two months the Prussians had surrendered their fortresses, and seen annihilated the greatness which Europe had failed to crush in the time of Frederick the Great. A period of humiliation followed, and for some years the people lived under the conqueror's yoke.

Deliverance came when Napoleon, stretching too far his power, and arousing the spirit of peoples, was defeated by Europe in arms. The liberation which alone Prussia could not have accomplished, was yet wrought partly by herself, for deliverance was preceded by regeneration in which her military system was fundamentally reformed. But it may be that what remained after all as the principal heritage from these years was the abiding sense that Prussia had suffered from being weak, and that only through military strength could there be safety in the future.

The expansion and greatness of Prussia left unfulfilled the old idea of a united Germany. Through the middle ages and down to this time Germany had remained disunited, and weak and despised because of it. The smallest states had now disappeared, but still there were larger ones, grouped under Austria in vague and shadowy empire. And the history of Germany in the half century which followed the downfall of Napoleon is a record of yearning and striving on the part of people filled with distant memories, and noble aspiration after that strength and union which had come to their neighbors and yet been denied to themselves.

Gradually it was seen that Austria would not or could not do the work, and presently that Prussia could do it. What fol-

W. KOCH

lowed has often been told: Denmark was despoiled, Austria defeated, and then a great confederation formed, and finally the old enemy France struck down, her eastern provinces rent away, and in the midst of mighty fervor a real German Empire founded. So splendid was this work of Bismarck that had his methods been different he might have stood as the greatest man of his century.

This era is important not only for what it ended and began, but also for the methods used in it. Bismarck was not worse than most of the diplomats who preceded or followed him, but the immensity of his achievement and the splendor of his success have cast into bold relief the evil and the good that was in him. Frequently his instruments were cunning, force, and fraud. With him means were justified by end. A great task was to be achieved, as he could, so long as it was achieved. Ordinary justice and moral considerations had with him, as with Napoleon, small place. There was pity for the weak and mercy to the fallen only as such things were politic. He left behind him a wondrous glamour, but he left also fear and hatred and desire for revenge. And as by force and violence he had accomplished what he had done, so he knew that only by force could his work be maintained.

Bismarck had isolated his enemies and then struck them down. From Austria he had taken little, and so he was able to create friendship based on identity of interests, but from France he had taken much, and France must remain lonely and weak, powerless to take vengeance and undo what Germans had achieved. In this he was largely successful. Before France had recovered from her wounds, Austria, Germany and Russia had drawn together. Italy was poor, and with her own unity just obtained; England remained as before in splendid isolation.

In France the years after 1871 are the saddest since the Hundred Years War, but they are at the same time of imperishable glory. The eastern frontier was now so near to Paris as to make it seem indefensible. Crushed by an enormous indemnity and also by the sense of irreparable disaster, it seemed that France had fallen on days too evil for cure. But with immortal spirit

her people at once began the task of regeneration. In a few years the frontier was re-fortified, and the new military system copied from the enemy made her seem more formidable than ever; though this strength was somewhat counterbalanced by the weakness inseparable from the beginnings of democratic government.

So strong did France become and so surprising was her recovery that Germany became alarmed, and seriously considered striking her down before preparations had gone further, and so completely that she could never be dangerous again. This was not done, but France remained filled with burning desire for revenge and hope of winning back some day the provinces which she had lost. It seemed, however, that the opportunity was destined never to come. At first she was not merely weak but alone. Afterwards when the balance of power had been redressed a different spirit had come at the same time that changes of birth-rate had produced such disparity of numbers as to make an attack by France upon Germany unthinkable.

The appearance of the German Empire was a rude disturbance of the old political equilibrium in Europe. Bismarck sought readjustment by a new grouping of nations about Germany. Austria, who soon came to be dependent upon German support, was firmly attached in alliance. To these two powers Russia had been drawn for a while, but it was soon apparent that the question of the Balkans made the interests of Germany's partners irreconcilable. During the Russo-Turkish War she was forced to choose which of her friends she would in the future have, and the support which she gave to Austria made it certain that Russia would soon seek her interests elsewhere.

Gradually in eastern Europe developed a situation like that to the west of the Rhine. On the one side was Russia smarting under indignity from the Teutonic powers; on the other France alone and unrevenged. Memory of old antagonisms kept these two powers apart, but in time common interest proved stronger, and after 1891 the world knew that there was a Dual Alliance. Meanwhile the astute Bismarck seized upon old suspicion and colonial rivalry, played upon Italy's fear of France,

and brought her into a Triple Alliance with Austria and the German Empire. Down to the end of the century and apparently for a few years after, the peace of Europe was maintained, as men believed, by the two armed camps of the Dual Alliance and the Triple Alliance, constantly increasing their armaments and debts, and keeping against each other vigilant watch and ward. On the outskirts of Europe remained England, safe, as it seemed, and aloof.

The first decade of the new century saw immense alteration. Friendships cooled, enemies became friends, and newcomers entered the opposing camps. Of this there were many causes, but most of them may be traced ultimately to the prodigious growth of the German Empire, which is the most striking phenomenon of Europe in recent times.

A nation which was mainly agricultural in 1870 had by 1910 come to be second only to the United States in manufactures and second only to England in shipping. So fast had national riches increased that it was now the wealthiest nation in Europe, having in two generations outstripped both England and France. It was filled with exuberant strength and aggressive energy. The basis of this was method and organization and efficiency, but it was also the increasing population of the empire. In all the changes of this time no single factor was more important.

In 1801 the population of Great Britain was 10,500,000, that of France 27,000,000; in 1911 they had respectively 45,000,000 and barely 40,000,000. In 1816 the territories of the present German Empire contained 24,000,000, but in 1911 this had risen to 66,000,000. In England population had increased rapidly; in France for a long time it had remained stationary; in Germany it had grown amazingly, and was now enlarging by a million souls a year. During the later centuries of the Roman Empire, and all over the world among civilized peoples in the nineteenth century, birth-rate had shown a tendency to fall as material comfort and standard of living were raised. It was the case in the Scandinavian countries, and to some extent in England and the United States; but in France, where conditions tended toward widest diffusion of proprietorship and wealth, this con-

dition had become universal, and after the loss of Alsace and Lorraine, France was left with a smaller population than before. On the other hand there were such countries as Italy and Russia, with relatively low standard of living, and fecundity excessively great; but there was also Germany with expanding industry and increasing wealth, where the birth-rate was tremendously high, and for a long time showed scant prospect of diminution. Thus it was that German statisticians could gloat over their old enemy, and look forward to the day when there would be in Germany twice as many people as in France, and as many as in England and France together.

Here was an old problem which had loomed up in bygone times and been lost in the changes of the past: whether a nation which increases rapidly the number of its people in lands already well filled, does so because of strength and joyous youth, vigor and creative power, and so strides onward to happiness and higher achievement, or whether it represents a lower civilization which in the past has brought strife and destruction; and whether a nation which increases little or merely maintains its numbers, even though it maintains them in intelligence and material happiness, is a tired nation with halting step upon the way of degeneracy and death, or whether it has attained a higher civilization to which the world will advance in the future.

But Germany, like a giant conscious of greatness waxed ever more ambitious and aggressive, and the pressure of numbers, first felt within her own bounds, was soon felt by all her neighbors, and at last by every nation in the world. For where intelligence and efficiency are nearly equal, numbers will usually be decisive. It was the greatness of her population which so long gave to France the leadership of Europe; and now behind admirable organization and thoroughness of method, it was increase of people which gave the German Empire impregnable position across the continent, and let its rulers dream of the hegemony of the world.

In France, where terrible memories lingered, the sense of inferiority became stronger and stronger. The rapid progress of the antagonist made impossible putting in the field so many

fighting men that there could be an attack upon Germany, and the utmost that patriotic Frenchmen could hope for in another day of wrath was the saving of their country by defensive warfare. Sometimes even this seemed hopeless without assistance. Accordingly, when Russia turned aside from Europe to seek adventure in Manchuria, and when her strength, though not destroyed, for a time disappeared in the west, France perceiving that the balance of power was altered again, sought the friendship of England, and England was glad now to give it.

The relations of England and Germany attracted little attention until the beginning of the twentieth century, when the wonderful progress of Germany, the industrial competition which resulted, and the immense power which she was gaining, caused increasing disquietude among British leaders. At this time, also, hostility during the Boer War became more ominous when Germany, avowing that her future lay upon the sea, began a naval program greater than any nation had ever undertaken. The construction of warships was carried swiftly forward, and for a time seemed to threaten British superiority on the sea, and, as many thought, the existence of their empire. Thus was brought about a situation fraught with peril for the future. England came to believe that she must seek powerful friends to stand with her, and so began making friendships and settling old disputes. Germany hastened and increased her efforts. Suspicion and recrimination followed, and the probability of conflict was openly discussed. Therefore, England having entered into friendly relations with Italy and America, sought the friendship of France, and became presently less suspicious of Russia. Then a mighty change became apparent: England who had so long stood apart, finding her interests outside of European entanglements was presently the center and indeed the inspiration of a vast combination opposed to Germany. The avowed object was defence; but Germans refused to believe that this coalition did not threaten their safety, and they saw in the activity of England a monstrous attempt to isolate their empire, surround it with enemies, and deprive it of chance to expand and seek out its "place in the sun."

In 1904 an agreement ended all disputes between England and France, each nation making promises and concessions. This Entente Cordiale was possible because memories of bitterness were dying out; but it was owing principally to the dread which both nations had of the Germans. And a change as significant soon followed in the relations between England and Russia. The fact that Russia, defeated in Asia, now seemed less menacing there, and that she was the ally of friendly France, combined with growing fear of German plans to secure an understanding between Petrograd and London. Hence, in the first ten years of the century there came to be not only the alliance between Russia and France, but also the friendly understanding between France and England, and then the understanding between Russia and England. And as interest and ambition made this threefold connection stronger, the whole group was referred to as the Triple Entente, and by 1912 represented the armed camp confronting the Triple Alliance.

The recent history of Europe is the history of the opposition of these two groups. The purpose of each was to maintain the existing situation, though probably on both sides there were leaders who aimed at the mastery of Europe. In resources and in actual power the opponents were not unevenly matched. In territory, in number of men, and in financial resources, the powers of the Entente were indisputably superior; but with the Triple Alliance there were advantages of cohesiveness, organization, and position which seemed to redress the balance; while the tradition of German military supremacy still held powerful sway.

England had immense resources in money, and she held within her empire a fourth of the territory and a fourth of the population of the world. But the bonds which united the parts were loosely drawn. The problem of framing some scheme of federation to present a strong and united front to enemies seemed hopeless to most Englishmen, while enemies believed that the first touch of disaster would see the empire crumble into fragments. And if it were doubtful whether the outlying parts could give effective assistance, it was certain that England herself, lacking as she

did a huge army like those possessed by her neighbors, would in case of a sudden blow be nearly impotent upon land. She must have the great wars fought upon the continent. She must support France against Germany, as once she had supported her against Spain, and later had supported Germany against France. Ultimately her salvation must lie in mastery of the sea. Here German competition was felt more severely each year, but as England had become alarmed in time and made prodigious efforts, her predominance was still unquestioned.

The strength of Russia was uncertain. So far did she lie across the world, and so vast was the number of her men, that there was in her bulk and immensity something horrible. About the end of the nineteenth century the Muscovite millions seemed a menace to the remainder of the world. But this legend had been shattered by the events of the Russo-Japanese War, which revealed inferior military and naval organization, corruption and incapacity in the government, and ignorance and discontent among the masses. After 1905 Russia was for some time of little weight in Europe. She was, indeed, recovering, but her enemies boasted that when she had recovered, she would be unwieldly and incapable as she had been in the far east.

In many respects France was more feared than England or Russia. From the awful disasters of 1870 she had recovered completely. In respect of ready money France was now the nation best prepared to fight. The frontier had been fortified impregnably, and the ardor of Frenchmen had built up an army which might be inferior to the German, but which the Germans themselves held in high respect. France they believed their enemy most dangerous and immediate, and the plans of their general staff always contemplated the first stroke to the west, and the crushing of France before her allies could render assistance. It was always doubtful whether France could hold her own: it was not certain that the temperament and genius of the people permitted the painstaking organization which the example of Germany made necessary, nor was it probable that a republican government allowed of the rapid disposition and iron control which must be expected in Berlin; while stationary popu-

lation face to face with enormous increase in Germany made a conflict more hopeless every year. "I hold France in the hollow of my hand," the emperor is said once to have declared.

There were, then, in this group France powerful and efficient, but smaller and weaker than Germany; Russia vast and incalculable, but of doubtful quality; England wealthy and all-powerful at sea, but untried in a war of armed nations. In a great conflict, moreover, these peoples must operate upon exterior lines, while it was not certain that all of them would act together. Always the bond of their union was thought of German aggression.

In the camp of the Triple Alliance there were elements of weakness still more pronounced. Formally the union was stronger than that of their rivals, but actually this was known not to be so; for the power of one of the partners was doubtful, and the action of another uncertain.

As to the strength of Germany there was never any doubt. Those who passed down the Rhine or went to Berlin saw everywhere colossal power. In the rising cities, the mounting numbers, and the vast material creations of this country there was a sheer vitality which one saw not so much in England and little in France. And in Germany the very purpose of the civilization seemed different. The army was the most powerful in the world; nowhere did numbers and equipment go so far to make a nation invincible; and no army could be so quickly assembled and hurled upon its enemy with such awful speed and precision. The navy, a newer creation, had grown monstrously and was now feared by every nation nearby. As an inheritance from the great war German soldiers believed that their army was unconquerable. Finally, the power of a great and intelligent people was wielded by a government autocratic in spirit, in character capable and efficient.

The closest alliance in Europe was that which bound Germany and Austria-Hungary. Whatever happened, it was nearly certain that Austria could count upon Germany, and in turn would follow her lead. But probably the alliance was stronger than the ally. About the Dual Monarchy there was something so artificial and conglomerate that apparently it was held together by

pressure from without, though some found the chief bond in the person of its aged ruler, after whose death the fragments must fall asunder. It was an unwieldy mass of many races and creeds. The peoples had never been fused into one nation, but lived under a government medieval and reactionary in spirit, which controlled by keeping them apart. The strength of the government resulted from an agreement by which a German minority in the north and a Hungarian minority in the south held in subjection all others; but even between these two quarrels were violent and bitter. In the Hapsburg monarchy was little of the strength which comes from the spirit and enthusiasm of national feeling, while in military and material things it was lacking and effete.

As to Italy, her progress had been one of the most hopeful signs in the recent development of Europe. Among the people much misery existed, and undoubtedly the country was poor, but population was increasing rapidly, and along with it prosperity and wealth. An army and a navy had been built up beyond the resources of the people, but they made Italy a strong ally and important in high politics. She might, then, be of much assistance to the powers of central Europe, but it gradually came to be seen that she was an unwilling member of the alliance. Into this alliance she had come through fear and anger at France, but the causes of fear had long been removed, and of France she was now a good friend. On the other hand, Austria, the old enemy and oppressor, still held unwilling Italians within her domain, while in the Balkans and in the Adriatic the rivalry of Austria and Italy became steadily more intense. In 1911 Italy attacked possessions of Turkey, the friend of the Germanic powers, and when as a result of the war she was left with spoil of Tripoli, the rift between herself and her allies widened, since her new province could be held no longer than she remained at peace with the Triple Entente. Though it might be good policy not to withdraw from the Triple Alliance in ordinary times, it was not certain that Italy could be brought to fight against France, and doubtful whether she would not one day give Austria defiance.

Thus it may be seen that the union of some of the partners was uncertain. Austria and Germany acted as one, but Italy stood with them as a result of conditions which no longer prevailed. In the opposing camp England and France were now true friends, and would most probably support each other, while Russia and France were bound by definite alliance and perhaps by common interest, but between Russia and England there were differences which had long obtained and were now suppressed only because of common fears. The ties, then, which bound some of the nations were artificial and repugnant, and might well dissolve as conditions changed; but there were also forces of such antipathy and such immeasurable depth that they could not easily be disposed of, and would hardly be removed without conflict. They were Pan-Germanism against Pan-Slavism, and the rivalry of Germany and England.

The ideas which underlie the first of these forces are so vast, indefinite, and comprehensive that it is difficult to understand and define them, nor is it certain that even their champions have reduced them to clearness and precision. By Pan-Slavism may be understood the idea of uniting in one great power all the Slavic peoples, who together would seek out their destiny; but less directly it means the increase of Russia and her expansion toward Constantinople and the Adriatic, and lordship over the races of the earth. Pan-Germanism is a vaguer thing. In the beginning it meant the union of all Germans in Europe, and perhaps of the Germans scattered in lands beyond, but in later years it has come in some sense to mean the rising ambition of Germany and Austria to obtain the mastery of the sea and the hegemony of Europe, and by building up a great empire from the Baltic Sea to the Persian Gulf, win for themselves the mastery of the world. Between these two ideals there might be truce, but there never could be compromise, for the realization of the one meant always the destruction of the other. Success would probably come to whichever power controlled the Balkan peninsula. When Russian battalions guarded the Bosporus and Aegean waters, then at last would Russia have her window upon the world; but on that day at Constantinople would Russia

control all Danube trade, her finger would be upon the artery of Austria, and on that day must come to an end the dream of the Germanic powers to stretch their dominion down to Babylon. And, on the other hand, if ever Germany through Austria won the Bosporus and the Hellespont, then would Russia, thrust back upon the north and south and east, lie like a giant bound among its enemies, a vast but an interior and a secondary power. In the Balkans, therefore, was the danger-spot of Europe. The destinies of polite and wealthy nations were here in the keeping of plotters and peasants and mountaineers.

More imminent, as some believed, though less necessary, was conflict between Germany and England. There was a group of Prussian historians who taught that the interests of the two were irreconcilable. In the past Germany had given herself over to religion, philosophy and idealism which became the common heritage of mankind, while England, sheltered by ocean and favored by currents and wind, had stood like a robber baron by the road of the commerce of the world, and from the toll which she levied there had grown wealthy and great. When her neighbors fought, she stood craftily aside, pitting one against the other, and winning greatest profit in the end. By chance, by accident, by the favor of the gods, not by merit, England now held a vast empire and commerce; but this empire was decrepit and rotten with prosperity and decay. Now at last when the German people had forged their unity and strength into a mighty weapon and begun their quest for the greater empire which their greatness predestined, everywhere the world was preëmpted, everywhere it was portioned among English people or their allies, while England held at her mercy the trade of Germany as once she had held the commerce of Holland; and whenever Germans sought to expand and win their way, always England plotted and thwarted and held them back. Evil as this was, it was intolerable that a vigorous, youthful nation should suffer so at the hands of one aged and tired. But there would come a day when the German fleet, mightier every year, could strike with fatal effect, when German battalions could march into London, and divide up a wondrous spoil. Then would the future of Germany

begin, for then she would hold the mastery of Europe, the commerce of the world, and the islands of the sea which had been England's. Even the Muscovite might then be bought off, or thrust aside into India, or given Constantinople, so that Germany and Russia between them might rule the world.

It is not impossible that the ruling caste, efficient yet reactionary, confronted by the rising tide of democracy strong in Germany but politically more fettered than in other free countries of the west, that this ruling caste sought to postpone the decline of its system by entrancing the people with projects of imperial splendor and world dominion, which by the logic of fate must be at the expense of Great Britain's empire. How many of the German people believed these things one may not say, perhaps an increasing number; but certainly there were Germans who proclaimed them, and in England produced uneasiness, alarm, and then panic. Men remembered how Denmark and Austria had been struck down and France lured to her ruin, and bethought them how in darkening days of the past their ancestors had fought against Philip and Louis the Grand. Was their heritage now at stake in new peril? Therefore England's jealousy and envy were all tinged with fear. Expansion, the winning of colonies, creating a great fleet, to Germany seemed glorious and proper ambition and mere doing what England had once done herself, but in all such efforts England saw threat and aggression. So British warships were multiplied, and ceaselessly from Whitehall a net was woven about Germany to hold her back and bind her in.

For nine years the powers who divided the greatness of Europe faced each other in armed and portentous peace. Four times was the flood near to bursting its wall. In 1905, France with the sanction of England made ready to acquire Morocco, but Germany, defying both antagonists, forced the abandonment of this design. Three years after, Austria, violating the Treaty of Berlin, incorporated Bosnia and Herzegovina within her dominion, when the wrath of Russia was quenched by the warlike demeanor of Germany, who appeared beside her ally in "shining armor." Both of these triumphs were secured before Russia had recovered

from her defeat by Japan. But as the balance of power was once more restored, the opposing group was more resolute. In 1911 France entered again upon her quest in Morocco. In the crisis which followed Europe was brought to the verge of war, but in the end Germany yielded, Morocco fell to France, and the Entente secured a great triumph. Next year the Balkan War made a situation equally grave. The army of Austria was mobilized, and a vast body of Russians gathered behind the girdle of Polish fortresses. But once more the statesmen of Europe averted the great war, and this crisis like the others passed away.

The outcome of the Balkan War made it nearly certain that this could not be done again, for the results of the war involved a change in the great game which the rival powers were playing. Down to 1913 Germany and Austria had gained advantages in the Balkans and reduced the prestige of Russia. Rumania was almost an appendage of the Triple Alliance, Turkey was coming to be considered so, and the other countries were weak, hemmed in by hostile neighbors, or distracted with local quarrels. It might seem that while Germany held Russia in check, Austria would march in triumph to Salonika. But the events of 1912 and 1913 produced a revolution. Servia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, and Greece, combining suddenly, fell upon Turkey and overwhelmed her in rapid and decisive campaigns, and when Austria, appalled by the sudden turn of events would have intervened to stay their progress, the opposition of Russia prevented her taking any action. The final result was the appearance of a group of powerful Balkan States who looked rather to Russia than central Europe.

The immediate consequences were far-reaching and profound. The Triple Alliance now became weaker at the same time that it was called upon to face more numerous enemies. Through the efforts of Austria an independent Adriatic state, Albania, had been constituted from the relics of the Turkish domain. Here Italy and Austria began striving for predominance with increasing ill-will and suspicion. Austria, long bounded on the south by friendly Rumania, indifferent Bulgaria, and by Servia hostile but helpless, now found these nations so much stronger and

so little friendly that she must thereafter keep no small part of her military forces to guard her frontier against them. This meant that she could now marshal fewer soldiers against Russia, and it meant that Austria and Germany were relatively weaker than before.

Now this alteration occurred at a time when the star of the Triple Alliance was no longer ascendant as it had been after 1904. The fact that Germany had suffered disaster in the controversy over Morocco was certain indication that England and France had gained much confidence and strength, while Russia, forgetting her evil fortune in the east, had applied herself so diligently to the task of recuperation, that it was no longer possible to neglect her or put her to shame.

There was much alarm in Germany in 1913. The shadow of Russia seemed cast across the empire, and fear and darkness prevailed in many quarters. The old revenge of France might be more dreaded now, and one cartoon showed Delcassé riding the Russian elephant toward Berlin. So, the German authorities who had long used the enmity of England to forward naval expansion, played now upon fear of Russia and obtained a huge increase of the army, raising it to 800,000 men. This they asserted was a purely defensive thing, designed to redress the balance upset by events in the Balkans; but to France it seemed ominous of coming attack, and she made a last effort to offset the preponderance of her neighbor. By extending military service from two to three years, she did obtain a considerable increase in her army of the first line, but it was realized that this was literally the last card which she could play in the gamble of fortune. At the same time Russia made great enlargement of her standing army, and throughout Europe naval expansion went on apace.

Melancholy days had come. The great nations, assembled in two groups, confronted each other always expecting war and always armed for the fray. In their train the smaller ones were gathering. Vast armaments, involving, as they did, perpetual anxiety and heavy taxation, might for a long while maintain equilibrium, but one day they would probably lead to conflict.

So great was the burden that some even hoped for the speedy coming of war to remove what could no longer be borne. But the most peaceful dared not disarm for fear of annihilation. At the beginning of 1914 probably some knew that the storm so much dreaded and so long postponed was about to burst at last.

The events which led immediately to the catastrophe of the summer are only known in part, nor can they be learned completely until some generations have passed; but certain elements of the situation and certain fundamental factors are understood now, perhaps, as well as they can be when the archives have yielded up their secrets.

Certainly there was the rivalry of Germany and England, resulting from the power and ambition of Germany, and the dread and jealousy of England. In Germany there was irritation at the unceasing hostility of France, and a growing desire to crush her since her friendship could not be obtained. In France the memories of the great war had left undying hatred, the statues of the lost provinces remained draped in mourning, and there lingered the dream of revenge and the redemption of Alsace and Lorraine. In eastern Europe a mightier conflict was looming up between Teuton and Slav, a conflict growing in the lap of fate. And finally, the nations whose increase was rapid were allied with time which would surely hereafter give them victory. It was to the interest of France and England to strike before there were more German millions. It was Germany's interest to wait, except that Russia growing still more rapidly made it fatal for her to delay.

A peculiar cause is thought by some to have been the changing character of the German people. It is probably true that Germany had been altered by too great success. The unparalleled triumphs of the Franco-Prussian War had given German leaders supreme confidence, and to the soldiers belief that they were invincible. This feeling, which might have become nobility and firmness, tended to appear as haughty arrogance, because of the completeness with which it possessed men's minds, and because of a materialism based upon immense material prosperity. Kindliness and homely virtue might still be the character of many

Germans, but this was thought to be less evident than half a century before. The ruling caste and hosts of followers now worshipped might and force and power. According to hostile foreigners, the teaching of Nietzsche that Christian morality was the base and servile relic of olden times so far prevailed that by Germans Christianity was being discarded. Old, pernicious doctrines that might was right, and the end makes good the means, reappeared in new and dangerous guise. In other nations arose distrust and appalling fear that Germany would strike without pity and without remorse, and exact to the very uttermost, while in Germany such boasts were loud and frequent. All this was best expressed in the writings of Bernhardi, well known now, but more dreadful when they first appeared: that war was necessary and ennobling, that no consideration outweighed necessity, that France must be struck down so that never again could she be an opponent, that the reckoning with England must follow, and that superior German culture must be spread by the sword.

But much that her enemies regarded as arrogance and aggression was always the expansion and increase and prosperity of Germany, and she saw in their fear of her and combining against her only bitter and dangerous envy. England seemed the greedy opponent, lying across her way and thwarting expansion; France a neighbor whose friendship had often been sought, who persisted in sullen wrath; Russia a power inferior and reactionary, but huge and perpetually a menace. To German people, wedged in between these foes, military perfection did not seem essentially militaristic, but the sole shield with which they warded off ruin and death. And to many the aggressive spirit, acknowledged to exist, was only that spirit which had once given their rivals a glory and a success which the past had denied to themselves.

The torch was kindled in the Balkans. Austria desired to recover what was lost in 1913. Servia stronger and more ambitious now yearned to possess Servian provinces which Austria had annexed in 1908. In Bosnia and Herzegovina was begun a propaganda, supported probably by Servian authorities, irritating to Austria and dangerous, and which culminated in June

in the murder of Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austrian throne. Austria, to avenge this crime, hoping, perhaps, to crush her insolent little neighbor, and apparently seeing an opportunity to regain the leadership of the Balkan peninsula, launched at Servia an ultimatum which no independent state could entertain. The terms of this ultimatum and the scant time allowed for an answer made it evident that Austria expected no compromise. The Servians appealed to Russia. If their country made entire surrender, or if Russia failed to respond, then Slav predominance in the Balkans would be only a memory of the past.

Russia gave support, and Austria and Russia began to mobilize. There was small chance that Austria could withstand the onset, or that Germany would permit her to be crushed alone. But because of the alliances which existed, if Germany entered the lists, then France must enter also, and the general conflagration would begin. Though we may not know certainly, it seems that France and England desired peace, and made efforts to secure it. The hopes of Europe, therefore, lay in the possibility that Germany might restrain her ally, and that Austria, though exacting from Servia satisfaction, might allay the apprehensions of Russia.

And now millions of humble people and travellers scattered across the continent became aware of the cloud which rose like a hurricane. Difficulties appeared in the way of peace. The ominous hush was broken by the march of troops and the rattle of arms. "The angel of death is abroad. We may almost hear the beating of his wings."

Upon whom the blame directly rests must long remain matter of opinion. Austria abated her demands too late. Germany arming apace required that Russian mobilization cease. France receiving peremptory question what she would do, replied that she would act as became the interests of France. In the early days of August there was war between Austria and Servia, and between Germany and France and Russia. Italy finding her interest not with her allies declared that the terms of the alliance allowed her in the present situation to remain neutral.

The position of England was peculiar. In such a war her in-

terests were bound up with those of France, with whom she had entered into such agreements that all the French navy was in the Mediterranean, while her own ships were in the North Sea. As a point of honor she could not allow France to be attacked by sea in the north. Moreover, if France were crushed, not only would England have lost her first line of defense, but if the writings of Pan-Germanists might be believed, all the coast from Antwerp to Boulogne would be seized, and Germany could then wait at her leisure for "the day." If war between England and Germany were inevitable, as many believed, then it was far better to fight now along with Russia and France, than without friends contend with a mightier Germany of the future. But a strong party asserted that conflict could be avoided in the future, and that to fight in this war meant strengthening Russia, a crime against Germany and civilization.

Germany herself decided the issue. The frontier of France from Belfort to Verdun was well-nigh impregnable. The general staff believed that a war against France and Russia must be fought by the swift crushing of France and the turning against Russia with full force, and it was suspected that German armies might in case of need march straight through Belgium upon Paris. Belgium desired above all things to remain out of the strife, but it was her misfortune to lie in the way. Certainly the neutrality of the country had been guaranteed by a treaty to which Prussia had been signatory, but as the chancellor said, necessity knows no law, and the man who hews his way must not think of the wrong he does. The beginning of hostilities saw the violation of Luxemburg and Belgium. Then were awakened all those apprehensions which had existed in England from the time of Elizabeth to the younger Pitt, and a few days more found England with Belgium in the circle of Germany's foes.

It has been thought that this summer was chosen to precipitate the conflict because of the supposed weakness of the Triple Entente. France was distracted by scandal and confession of military weakness; Russia by industrial unrest; and England by the controversy over Home Rule. It might well have seemed in

Berlin that the moment was at hand to strike for world dominion —or downfall.

But however this be, it may be seen that the causes which led to the cataclysm had long been in operation. They must be sought in the curse of militarism, the spoliation and resentment of France, the envy and apprehension of England, the arrogance and prosperity of Germany, the weakness of Austria, the rise of the Balkan states, and the glowering menace of Russia.

The blood and the tears and the ruin of Europe bring little of hope as yet. Russia all-powerful and reactionary? Germany over Europe, omnipotent in arms? Europe exhausted and spent? Perhaps in some wondrous way good will be wrought from the wreck, but this we do not yet see. Man who knows little of the present knows not the future, and must watch in dumb expectation the loom of the universe rush on.

W 80

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